

The Adventures of the Woman in Red-Part VI

by The Woman in Red

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The Adventures of the Woman in Red-Part VI

I WOULD LIKE YOU ALL TO MEET A FRIEND OF MINE

I reviewed our conclusions with the Boss the next evening, and raised the issue of the outing on the boat. Amazing, not only did Chief McFarland approve the outing, but he also approved of my extending an invitation to Lisa, Anne, and Agent Jones. This was going to be fun. I couldn't wait to see the expressions on the analysis team's faces.

Wednesday, I called Jones. As usual, he picked it up the first ring. "Dude, how the hell are ya?"

That damn sigh again, "I believe the appropriate human response is to say that I am fine."

"I guess we had better keep up the lessons, Jones. Next time try saying something like, hanging in there or getting by."

"Hanging in there. Getting by. What do these things mean?"

I sighed right back at him, "They mean that you're fine. Whatever. I called to see if you have anything on your calendar for Saturday. I'm taking the boat out for a party and I thought you might want to come along."

I could hear the smugness, "So you do miss me. I will be there. Are we meeting your friends from Rhode Island again?"

"Duh, Jones. I told you before, my friends from Rhode Island are all still part of your network. I can't ever see them again. Any one of them could play host to Agent Brown. We just email each other." I

missed them terribly. "You'll be meeting a different group of people, none of whom are capable of hosting an Agent. Lisa and Anne you've seen before-they are the ones who taped me screaming during sex."

"I remember. I've raped women who screamed less than you do."

"Shut up," I said in a warning tone, "the rest of the group are my new analysis team. They are a bunch of obnoxious buttheads, but they wanted to go out on the boat. And I'm not taking her out without you along."

"Why is that? Your logic escapes me."

"It's not logic. It contradicts everything, but the only time I feel safe enough to remove my sidearm and relax inside the Matrix is when I'm with you."

I could practically smell the smugness, "So, you think of me as your protector, then? Like Neo was when we first met."

"Not quite, Jones. I have been informed that my death will not come at your hands. I believe the person who told me that, she's always right. My instincts tell me that I am safe with you as long as no other potential hosts are within range." I hoped that I hadn't just made a choice based on my instincts. It was time to talk to the Oracle. Maybe I could get a better idea of how much time I had before Brown came for me.

"I'll be there, and I will do my best to behave in as man-like a fashion as I can."

"Good, except for Lisa and Anne, who saw you briefly, none of them has ever had an encounter with an Agent-this is going to really put the fear of God into them." I stopped to smirk for a moment before continuing, "I'll see you at the Marina at noon. Oh, and bring my shades. Yours are too big for me. They need to be big to fit around that big, empty head of yours."

"You are not a particularly nice person." Nice try for an amateur.

"Bite me, Jones." I hung up. This was going to be a party that would be spoken of in song and story for years to come.

I called a meeting that afternoon to brief the analysis team about the upcoming excursion.

"Well, people, it appears that Chief McFarland has indeed approved the boating party for this Saturday. I've added a couple of friends of mine to the guest list." I'd save Jones' presence as a surprise. "Because of the danger involved in getting everyone to the boat, Neo will be bringing you inside at 11:30. I've enabled the chat functionality for you, please do not abuse it with chatter. If he or I issues you any orders, you will follow them explicitly, no arguments, Avon. Breaking the rules can result in not only my death, but yours as well. If any rules are broken, the party's over and you will be returned to the real world."

I looked around the table, " You will be entering at the

Harbormasters' office. Be polite to him, he's a retired field operative and he's seen more than you'll ever know. Neo will bring you down to the Marina and aboard the boat. While you are out in the open, keep your mouths shut and follow him. I don't want to see horseplay, or anything that might attract attention to you. Once aboard, you will go straight below to the lounge, which will be secured until such time as we are in a safe location. Beer and food will be set out, so just start partying. Yes, Xenium, you can bring your 80's music, I'll set up a separate zone in the sound system so I don't have to listen to it."

"At 12:30, Neo will return with Lisa and Anne. We will cast off immediately, and leave the harbor. We will be returning to the Marina after dark, and most of the people there will be pretty hammered, so the risk will be somewhat lower. I'll take you up to the exit myself."

"One more thing, do not mention anything aloud relating to our Section's activities that day. No comments, no questions, nothing. It is necessary that our security not be compromised. Anything of that nature is to be discussed via the chat function. Not everyone who will be on the boat that day is part of our Section. I will have moderator-level functionality, so I'll hear everything you say unless I'm blocking you, and I can and will block you from one another if you abuse the privilege. I will not be annoyed, Avon."

I dismissed them, and returned to my office. The phone was ringing, it was the Oracle returning my call from earlier. "Hello, child, how are you bearing up?"

"As well as can be expected, I suppose. I don't suppose you called to let me know that there was hope after all for me."

"Phoenix, there is always hope. I have some further advice that might help you along the path that lies before you."

"My child, as long as I have known you, there has been a barrier around you of your own creation, a shell that you hide within to keep yourself from being hurt by the world. You keep even your closest friends at arms length and an emotional distance. I have seen the destruction of that barrier. Once it is gone, you will be able to trust someone who cannot be trusted, and open your eyes to the truth that has eluded you. You will suffer the loss of someone dear to you, but you must believe the unbelievable and forgive the unforgivable. Then, at long last, you will love the unlovable. Only once you have tasted love for the first time in your life, and known both the bitter and the sweet, shall you receive your deliverance. And from that deliverance shall come hope for all of us."

I thanked her for her advice and she hung up. I walked over to the window and stood looking out.

Well, that was as clear as mud. I'd known her far too long to expect a straight answer. The love thing bothered me. It bothered me a lot. I knew a lot of unlovable people, and shuddered at the thought of its being one of the analysis team or Chief Fitzgerald. If it was Avon, I'd never speak to the Oracle again. And, I'd seek out Agent Brown and beg him to shoot me-that would indeed be deliverance, salvation even. Ugh.

I'd already lost people who were dear to me, I had lost my old friends forever. It did sound as though my death would not be a waste if there was hope for our people. Somehow, out of my deliverance would come the weapon we needed to destroy the machines.

I realized that I hadn't checked my CHEATMASTER inbox in a while, since before my encounter with Agent Brown last Friday. I opened it and there was a message from AB2, timestamped from that night. It was brief, "You are the woman I am looking for. Why did you run away from me?" That really pissed me off.

I replied, "AB, you shithead, I see you've figured out how to get past the filter by changing your user name. I know who and what you are. I hate you and I will live the rest of my life in fear of you. I know why you are looking for me. For the record, I didn't run, I walked away from you, and I will continue to try to avoid you until the time comes that I cannot escape. I know that time is coming. I know I won't always be so lucky. Drop dead, asshole." I clicked SEND, and stuck my tongue out at the monitor.

The rest of the week passed relatively quietly. I spent most of the following day with Morpheus aboard the Neb debriefing one of his crewmembers. Some time ago he had come to me at the Centre with a project to develop a simulated Matrix complete with simulated Agents for one of their newly unplugged crewmembers who refused to let go. The poor woman had fallen in love with Agent Smith and had wanted to return to him. I pitied her, especially as she had somehow hacked back into the real Matrix to be with Smith and had destroyed him.

I brought my notes back to my Section and spent all day Friday preparing a report based on the Tanner Project. I forwarded it to the Matrix section's analysis team and copied my own team. She insisted that he had developed feelings for her, she believed he loved her. I found this disturbing, but her feelings for him likely caused her to believe that he returned them. In my cover letter, I reminded my team that to take this data with a grain or two of salt. The last thing I needed was any of them trying to convince me that programs were capable of human emotions. I'd fight to the death against that overly sentimental point of view.

Saturday, I logged into the Harbormaster's office and warned him that some very obnoxious amateurs were on the way and to ignore them. It would be their first time in the field. We both rolled our eyes. It was a beautiful day, very warm and brightly sunny. I was sweltering in my windbreaker and jeans, but I needed to conceal my shoulder holster and sidearm. The boaters and tourists at the Marina didn't carry guns.

Neo arrived right behind me with the analysis team. I revisited the warnings I'd issued previously before I led them down to the Rage's berth and I took them below to the lounge. True to my word, there was plenty of food and liquor waiting. Xenium immediately put on some Cyndi Lauper and I locked them in. Neo left to return to the real world for Lisa and Anne and I started getting the Rage ready to sail. I was in the pilothouse warming up the engines, listening to Korn, and nervously scanning the Marina for Brown when Jones arrived.

I turned down the music and went to meet him. He was, as always dressed in his brown suit and shiny loafers, so I ordered him below to the bedroom where I'd laid out a pair of shorts for him. I

followed him to the bedroom, where I stripped down to my swimsuit, replacing my jeans with shorts, and stowed my sidearm in the nightstand along with his. I had a number of machine guns secreted around the Rage's decks, just in case of trouble.

He was naked and magnificent as ever and I reached out and grabbed his hand and pulled him to stand in front of me. I needed some supporting data for one of my theories. First, I wrapped my fingers around the shaft of his masculinity, noting that it stiffened immediately. Agents, I was certain, had no need for Viagra. I lowered my head and opened my mouth, engulfing the head and applying a steady suction.

I heard the hiss of his suddenly indrawn breath and I released him and looked up at his face. His eyes were closed and he had a wide smile on his face. This would bear further investigation. I released him and sat back. He almost looked disappointed when he opened his eyes and looked down at me.

"No one has ever done that to me before." Duh, Jones. "I believe that the sensations I experienced are what you would call pleasurable. But, why did you stop?"

"This is not a good time, Jones. Later, after we get back and my colleagues and friends are returned to the real world." I stood up and ran my hands over his silky skin for a few minutes before handing him the shorts.

"Do you not wish me to wear a shirt," he inquired

"No, I do not wish you to wear a shirt," I mocked, "Those rock-solid abs of yours are one of the things I find most attractive about you."

He sighed and put them on and followed me up to the rear deck. Neo was just arriving with Lisa and Anne, who were so entranced by the aforementioned abs that they didn't recognize him.

Jesus, Phoenix, where did you find him? Anne was practically drooling on herself.

Lisa agreed, *He's magnificent. Are there any more at home like him?*

I addressee them both, *I'll introduce you later. And, yes, there is another one at home like him.*

I sent them below to the lounge while I said my goodbye's to Neo who was eyeing Jones. Jones returned his look impassively.

I surprised Neo by hugging him. "What happened to the no touching rule?" he joked.

"The Oracle basically told me to cut it out." I shrugged. "Give my best to Trinity, I'll call her later in the week. Maybe the four of us can go out on the boat next weekend."

"Who is the fourth?" he wondered.

I glanced over my shoulder at Jones.

"Oh," he shook his head. "Is there anywhere decent for lunch besides seafood down here?"

"Yeah, Siro's. I used to eat there, really good noodles." He thanked me and walked away down the dock.

Lisa and Anne were still arguing over which of them should get his friend, and complaining that I should have invited the friend, while I cast off and went back up to the pilot house. I turned up the music and eased the Rage away from the dock. Jones took up his usual position behind me and kept me company while I headed out of the harbor.

Once clear of traffic, I felt like showing off, so I gunned her engines and made a couple of wide turns, throwing up enormous sheets of spray. There were a number of mental exclamations from the lounge below, which was equipped with large windows. I had found a different location to anchor, and I used the charts and the GPS to guide me there.

I turned off the engines, dropped anchor, and engaged the proximity warning system. If any boats approached, I would have enough advance notice to go on alert and leave the area before they got too close.

I turned to Jones and wrapped my arms around his waist, slipping my hands under the waistband of his shorts to fondle his firm ass. His mouth came down on mine and he kissed me hungrily. I grew aroused and ground myself against him until the complaints from below reached annoying proportions.

I broke the kiss reluctantly, "It's time to let everyone out to party. Come on and I'll introduce you around. He followed me below and into the lounge. Chaos reigned within. Saccharine 80's pop music was blaring from the speakers. Lisa and Anne were huddled in a corner deep in conversation about how sexy my friend was and speculating about their chances with his friend, ignoring Swill and Choad who were desperately trying to get their attention. Avon was arguing with Xenium and the Ratman, who had few social skills, was cowering with his plastic rodent and drinking a beer. Michelle was casting her disapproving glare on everyone. I really missed the crew of the Highlander at that moment. They know how to party.

I switched off A-ha and cleared my throat, "I would like you all to meet a friend of mine." Everyone stopped and stared. Jones had entered the room behind me and seated himself in an empty chair near Lisa and Anne. I sat on his knee and he wrapped an arm around my waist. I enlaced my fingers in his and smirked at all of them.

MY FIRST NAME IS AGENT

I indicated Lisa and Anne, "You've met Lisa and Anne before." They still looked mystified I pointed out everyone around the table to him. So far, no one had identified him, they were only mentally speculating as to how serious things were between us and what he thought of my having relations with Agent Jones on the side. Michelle agreed with Lisa and Anne that he had a gorgeous body, but it was too bad about his face.

I turned to Jones and whispered in his ear, "I can't believe it, none of them has recognized you. Do you want me to introduce you as who you really are, or let them continue to believe that you are just a man? If so, I'll need another name to tell them. Do you have a first name?"

He trailed one finger up my arm, making me gasp softly, before he replied equally quietly, "My 'first name' is Agent."

I kissed him before addressing the staring group, "Come on, you guys, this is supposed to be a party. Stop sitting around like a bunch of losers." I jumped up and grabbed a beer off the table and lit a joint from the case in my pocket.

Michelle addressed me in an arch tone of voice, "Aren't you going to introduce your friend to us."

I replied even more archly, "I really didn't think that would be necessary. I'm really surprised that none of you have realized who he is."

I glared at Lisa and Anne, "I'm particularly surprised at you two. You've met him. Twice."

They looked at each other, and then at Jones in shocked recognition. They were speechless for a moment before making identical sounds of disgust and scooting closer together.

I turned to Avon, "I really expected better from you, Mr. Self-styled expert. I guess you really aren't so smart after all." I turned my back on him and took another toke from the joint before passing it to Lisa and Anne who shared it between them, quickly smoking it down to the smallest of roaches.

There was rapid-fire speculation going on amongst the analysis team. Some believed that he might be Agent Jones, dissenters argued that I was just lying to them. I hadn't even bothered to dress him up as an Agent.

I stretched and announced that I was going to get some sun, Lisa and Anne followed me out of the room, staying so close they nearly tripped me going up the stairs. Jones strolled out behind us. Once on deck, I stripped off my shorts and stretched out on my stomach. Lisa and Anne sprawled on an adjoining bench, smoking another joint. Jones sat down next to me, and I put my head in his lap and relaxed, listening idly to the arguing still going on in the lounge.

Avon finally decided that this man was an imposter, not an Agent, and managed to convince the others that he was right. The mental chatter ceased and they returned to partying, satisfied that they had won this round. I cranked up the stereo and smiled.

Gradually, they emerged on deck and explored the Rage. They found the bells and whistles impressive but soon went back below to hang out and talk. This was turning out to be the most boring party ever.

The sun was hot and soon I grew thirsty. I sat up and rummaged in one of the coolers for beers, handing them out to Lisa and Anne, who toasted me in gratitude. I opened mine and drank about half in one

gulp. Better, but I was still too hot. I handed my half empty beer to Jones to hold and dove off the stern.

With shrieks of delight Anne and Lisa joined me and soon a noisy, splashfest was underway. When we grew tired of playing, we climbed back up on the boat. Jones silently handed them towels and then wrapped one around me, drying me off gently. I accepted my beer from him and finished it before going below to the bedroom for my comb. Lisa and Anne followed me for some girltalk.

I combed my hair and pinned it back up while they sprawled on the bed, carefully avoiding Jones' clothing. I pushed everything aside to make room for myself and sat fidgeting with his radio.

Lisa leered, "I can see why you are enjoying him so much, he's got a nice body."

Anne contradicted her, "That's not a body, that's just his user interface."

Lisa shrugged, "With abs like that, who cares."

We laughed like loons, "I'll tell you guys, he's the best lay I've ever had. He's huge, but he's very careful and his technique is really impressive. And, there is another one at home like him."

Lisa screwed up her face, "Ugh, no thanks."

I shrugged and put down the radio. I told them about Agent Brown's most recent email message and my less than friendly reply to it. Anne grabbed up the radio and set the earpiece in her ear. "Let's have some fun with Agent Brown."

She turned on the radio, winced and adjusted the dials and spoke into the microphone, "Hey, asshole. Are you listening Agent Brown?"

She relayed his reply mentally, *Who are you? You are not the woman I am looking for.*

"You're a loser, Brown. You aren't ever going to catch Phoenix. She's too smart for a dumbass like you."

I yanked the radio away from her, turned it off and yelled at her, "Are you nuts? Goaded him like that, you must be trying to get me killed."

Lisa defended her, "She's just teasing him. You pick on Jones all the time. I saw you call him an idiot and smack him the day we recorded you."

I rolled my eyes, "Yeah, that's different. He lets me get away with it. Jones isn't hunting me like a rabid dog."

Our battle attracted a crowd of interested onlookers. Avon, Michelle and Swill were avidly taking it all as they crowded into the bedroom.

Anne went on the offensive, "He doesn't have to, you are screwing him like a bitch in heat."

I waved Jones' radio under her nose, "This is not a toy. 'Let's have some fun with Agent Brown'. That was a really stupid thing to do. The person you called a loser, a dumbass, and an asshole is a vicious, cold-blooded killer who will stop at nothing until I am dead."

Lisa attacked, "Get off your high horse, you said the same things in your email to him. Besides, you invited one of those damn things along with us on the boat. I'm so scared of him that I don't know what to do and I can't get away from him. We are trapped on this boat with that monster! What the hell were you thinking?"

I snarled at her, "I did not say that. I just told him that I hate him and I fear him. I admitted that I know he will one day find me and kill me. I did not insult his abilities like you did. And you know damn well why Agent Jones is here today."

Anne sneered, "Yeah, so you can fuck him some more."

That was it, I totally lost it and hauled off and slapped her. Lisa jumped to her defense and shoved me off the bed onto the floor. In seconds the three of us were rolling around on the floor screaming obscenities, kicking and punching.

None of the spectators was brave enough to wade in to the angry battle until Jones pushed his way through and pulled me out of the tangle by hooking one arm around my waist and the other one around my shoulder. He held me against him and try as I would, I could not escape him. He was, after all, an Agent, his strength far beyond human.

Lisa and Anne cowered away from him as he stood over them holding me while I struggled and swore. As one, all three of us burst into tears, and then apologized. Jones sighed very audibly, and all three of us laughed.

I turned around in his arms to face him, "It's OK, Jones. You can put me down now. Friends also fight when they are over-stressed. We've done it before. No one ever gets seriously hurt."

He put me down and shook his head. "Human women," he said in an exasperated tone. "I will never understand human women. Nothing you do makes any sense."

I smiled up at him and put my arms around his neck, "That's just as it should be, Jones. We've managed to keep human men from understanding us since the beginning of time. What makes you think a machine can?"

Lisa and Anne snickered, and I informed him, "Now Jones, its time you made nice to these two. We were mostly fighting because they are as afraid of you as I am of your colleague. They used your radio to taunt him and I got mad."

"I will try," he assured me.

"Good, I'm gonna go get us some more beers and another joint and lets see if we can all settle down and enjoy the rest of the day." I stepped away from him and faced the group of rubbernecks just inside the bedroom, "And what the hell are you looking at?" They

scattered.

There was considerable further mental discussion amongst the team regarding the identity of my mysterious male friend. Swill believed that he was the real Agent Jones, and had managed to sway the Ratman and Xenium. Avon, Michelle and Choad firmly believed that the whole thing had been staged to convince them of Jones' being a real Agent. The radio was a bone of contention for a while until it was remembered that I had acquired a radio during Brown's captivity, as well as a complete suit of Agent clothing, which had been artfully scattered on the bed.

I returned to the bedroom loaded down with beer, snacks and a freshly lit joint. Anne and Lisa were sitting on the edge of the bed and Jones was perched on the nightstand talking in his low, quiet voice. I gave them each a beer then took a toke and passed the joint to Lisa. I neatly folded Jones' clothes up and put them on top of the dresser before I snagged a pillow and stretched out across the foot of the bed on my side.

Anne passed me the joint and I rolled over on my back, took a couple of deep drags off it. I handed it off to Lisa and then exhaled, idly watching the smoke swirling in the sunbeams coming through the windows.

A few more rounds and the joint was exhausted. Lisa and Anne had relaxed, the three of us were sitting cross-legged now. They were lounging against the headboard and I was leaning against the footboard. Jones got up from the nightstand and stretched across the bed between us. He was lying on his back with his arms folded under his head and his eyes closed. They were both within inches of him, but were more curious than fearful.

The two of them were openly eyeing his muscular body and we were having a really lewd discussion behind his back. *Isn't he something. That belly of his drives me nuts. Dammit, why can't I find a man, just one, with abs like that.*

Who would want to? Lisa inquired. *I've heard that muscleheads are usually stupid or have no dick, or both.*

I snorted, and Jones opened one eye briefly. I stroked his sculpted stomach and he smiled and closed the eye again. *He's certainly got plenty of dick, and he's AI, so he's not stupid. Too bad he's not human.*

Yeah, if he was human, you'd be the luckiest woman ever, Anne commented.

Don't I know it. Hey, I talked to the Oracle, the other day. She gave me the usual mumbo-jumbo, but from what she said, this, I looked down at Jones, * isn't going to last long. She told me that I was going to fall in love for the first time. Something about it being bitter and.*

Lisa leaned forwards, *Did she say who? Or give you any clue?*

I shrugged, *You know the Oracle. She just said he would be unlovable-which could be pretty much any of the men I know right now. It just better not be Avon. I swear, if I fall in love with Avon,

I'll go find Brown and beg him to shoot me and put me out of my misery.*

Anne laughed silently, *Maybe you are going to fall in love with Jones.*

I shuddered, *NOT. She told me a long time ago that no matter how hard I tried to keep the world at arms length, one day someone would confess his love for me, and I would want to refuse him, but if I returned that love it would be, like wonderful or some shit like that.* I rolled my eyes, *I've never given anyone a chance to get that close to me, I just use 'em and dump 'em if they get too clingy.*

I looked down at Jones, *That's one thing I enjoy about Jones. I don't have to worry that he's going to develop some emotional attachment. I'm free to enjoy his company and the sex.* I couldn't resist anymore, I stretched out alongside him and rested my hand on his chest.

His eyes opened and he rolled over on top of me suddenly, I shrieked and tried to push him off. Lisa and Anne laughed at me and got up and walked out of the room and shut the door firmly behind them. He started to pull off my bathing suit, but I stopped him. "First, lock the door. I don't want another audience in here."

NOW WE KNOW WHO THE SCREAMER IS

Our minimal clothing was shed in seconds and Jones came to stand before me again. He said nothing, but the expectant look on his face told what he wanted. I looked up at him, "OK, then, lie on your back and spread 'em and I'll give you more of the same."

He smiled that annoyingly smug smile as he stretched out on the bed. He was already fully erect and I knelt between his legs and grasped his thick shaft. Everyone has their little talents, I happen to give great head. I licked him for a while before taking him in my mouth.

His moan surprised me and I looked up. His eyes were squeezed shut and his face was contorted in a very realistic look of pleasure. I shrugged mentally and went back to my task. I took him deep into my mouth and sucked him while laving the head with my tongue. He groaned loudly and his back arched, pressing himself deeper into my mouth. I could feel his pulse beating, far faster than its usual steady rhythm.

This was just too much to be believed. I shifted my body and straddled him. His eyes opened and he watched me as positioned myself above him and then impaled myself slowly on him. He let his breath out very slowly while I lowered myself until I rested against his pubic mound. He reached up and pulled me down against his chest, kissing me fiercely while his fingers worked their magic down my spine. I raised my head and cried out while I had my first orgasm of the day.

I had my second and third soon after, then I lost count. Jones levered himself up and rolled me over on my back, keeping our bodies joined together as he rolled on top of me. He began to thrust and I kept coming and screaming. Somewhere along the way I realized that he

was grunting and groaning while he pounded into me. He had never made any sounds during sex before. I snorted. Whatever.

I reached my climax and clutched at him while shrieking his name. Seconds later, his muscles stiffened, his back arched and he shouted my name before collapsing on top of me, panting, heart racing.

I was impressed. I've faked a lot of orgasms in my time, but this was art. I thought about cheering, but the dead weight on top of me was crushing the breath out of me. I gave him a shove and he slid out of me and rolled over to lay flat on his back, chest heaving, a sated grin on his face. Oh, brother, what a ham.

I sat up to reach for my cigarettes and felt something wet run out of me. Oh, gross. That was taking realism a bit too far. I lit up and smoked while I watched Jones. Finally, he opened his eyes and looked up at me. "Is that what its like for you?" I gave him a dirty look.

He sat up, "What is the unfriendly expression for?"

I made a tsk sound before responding, "I have never faked an orgasm with you. I do not find it the least bit funny that you found it necessary to fake one with me, and especially to go to the length of fake ejaculate. That's just plain sick."

He opened his mouth to argue, but I cut him off as I continued to scold him, stabbing the cigarette in his direction to punctuate my words, "Jones, I will not be manipulated by a damn machine. I am well aware of your limitations. I do not expect you to respond like a human during sex."

I glared at him, and he interrupted, "I do not think you are aware of my 'limitations'. You do not understand me any more than I understand you."

I relented, "You are probably right, Jones. We humans made a lot of assumptions and postulated a lot of theories, but there aren't many hard facts."

He nodded, "It is much the same for us. We simply cannot understand humans. We machines are very predictable. Our existence is based on rules, which cannot be broken. We are capable of learning and evolving higher functionality, as are humans as they develop during their lifetimes. Humans, however, seem to willfully ignore the rules which bind them, and behave in a completely unpredictable fashion, making them impossible to analyze." He smiled, "Especially human women."

I smiled back, "So, then, Jones, what was all that moaning and shit about?"

"Like all of my kind who have sensory input available, I am capable of experiencing sensations. Unfamiliar sensations have to be analyzed for me to determine what they are. Once I do that, certain hard-coded portions of my programming are activated and they soft-code new functionality."

"It has taken me a while to analyze the sensations I experience during sex with you. I concluded earlier today when you performed

oral sex on me that they are 'pleasure'. My programming has changed to allow me to feel pleasure, and also to do what humans call 'coming'."

I stared at him, my mind racing. A breakthrough, but damn it, he'd just proven one of my pet theories wrong. Agents ARE Sentient Programs. Shit, there went my reputation into the proverbial toilet. I inquired, "Can you feel 'pain'?"

"No, that capability was never enabled in our kind. It would be a dangerous weakness for an Agent to experience pain."

I sighed, "True, so I shouldn't bother with my daydreams of torturing that asshole Brown for sport, then." I shrugged and put out my cigarette, "I guess that means we can both enjoy the sex, now."

He grinned and pulled me against him for another session of screaming and shouting. Some time later, I emerged from the bedroom and sauntered into the lounge. I grabbed up a beer and lit a cigarette and eased myself gingerly into a chair. Jones' new enthusiasm made him a bit rougher than usual.

Avon was smirking, "Wellâ€|now we know who the Screamer is."

I blushed and gave him a dirty look as he continued, "So, is it only that good if you pretend your lover is an Agent? Or are you capable of having normal sex with him?"

I threw my beer at him, hitting him square in the chest. "Avon, I'm sick of this. Are you being purposely blind, or are you really that stupid."

I could see the nods of agreement around the room. Lisa and Anne were shaking their heads and rolling their eyes. "Lets look at the data and see if it supports your conclusion. I AM XTC32. XTC32 is having a sexual liaison with an Agent. I am having a sexual liaison with the being you've just referred to as 'my lover'. Only one conclusion can be drawn from it."

Swill argued, "This game of yours has gone too far. I'm not sure anymore about the XTC32 reports. I don't know how reliable we can consider that data, IF you are really her, which I do not believe at this moment."

"Fine, what proof do you want that he is Agent Jones? Something that won't involve the destruction of my boat, that is. That leaves out most forms of combat, and there's not room enough for him to run to show his speed."

Michelle smirked, "Shoot him in the head. If he's really an Agent, he'd leave his host and it would be a different person."

I turned to her in horror, "And his host would be dead. I will not waste a human life just to prove you pack of fools wrong."

Avon shrugged, "It's just a coppertop. Hardly a waste of a HUMAN life."

"And I call him a monster. You are worse. All of us were in the powerplant until we were unplugged."

Swill jeered, "You just don't want to do it, because you'd kill him. He's just a man, no different from any of the rest of us."

"Actually, if he was a man, he'd still be different from you, because he doesn't have a big fat ass like yours. Also, he's not sadly lacking in a certain critical area like I've heard you are." Swill went pale and looked about to burst into tears any moment. "You are such a pussy, Swill. No wonder Angelica dumped you."

The rest of the group snickered at Swill's discomfiture. I walked out and conferred briefly with Jones, who agreed to my demonstration. He agreed to get dressed and wait for me on the rear deck. I retrieved an Uzi from the pilothouse and checked the radar to make sure that there were no other vessels close enough to here the chatter of automatic weapons fire.

I went below and addressed the group who were now all ragging on Swill for being such a loser with women. Someone had put Gillette's 'short dick man' on the CD player and he was starting to tear up. I switched off the music and brandished the machine gun.

"Come on everyone, I feel the need to squeeze off a few rounds." They followed me up the stairs. The general consensus was that I'd completely lost my marbles.

Jones, impassive in his brown suit, shades and shiny loafer, stood atop the stern deck. There was considerable mental discussion as several of the group insisted they recognized him. Avon and Swill remained staunch in their denial and the others continued to waver in their opinions.

I climbed up the stairs to the pilothouse and stood in the doorway, giving me a clear trajectory at the water behind Jones. I really didn't want to put any holes in the Rage. I addressed the assembled scientists. "People, as we all know, Agents have certain abilities that humans do not. Their strength and their speed are well documented. Unlike humans, Agents can dodge bullets." I squeezed off a few rounds just to the left of Jones, they kicked up the water just behind the boat. "As you can see, there are real bullets in this gun."

"Oh, get on with it, Phoenix," yelled Avon, "I can't believe you are going to waste your boyfriend just to make some point, especially after your lecture on the value of human life, but hurry up. My beer's getting warm."

I shrugged, and squeezed off another burst, this time directly at Jones. His upper body was a blur as he dodged every single bullet fired from the automatic weapon. "Whoa, that was pretty cool, Jones. I've only heard about that, I've never seen it before."

Lisa hollered, "Again, again!" so I fired, again hitting only air. I stowed the Uzi and jumped down to the deck. There was complete silence from the now open-mouthed analysis team. Jones stepped down and put his arm around my shoulder and smirked at them.

My own smirk matched his, "May I present the one, the only, Agent Jones. Crow is now being served in the lounge. Eat hearty." I

exchanged high-fives with Lisa and Anne as the now-frightened scientists bolted for the lounge and slammed the door. The general consensus had changed dramatically. No one doubted me any more.

I glanced up at him and grinned, "That certainly put the fear of God into them."

He looked puzzled, "First I am a monster, now I am God?"

I sighed and rolled my eyes, "It's a figure of speech, Jones. Go get changed, you're wearing too many clothes." I smacked his ass as he walked away and the three of us laughed.

Lisa shook her head in disbelief, "Phoenix, I'm not sure how you did it, but you've managed to turn an Agent into a lapdog."

I looked at her askance, "Lisa, don't ever believe that. He's just as dangerous, just as vicious a killer as ever. I don't ever want to run into him in the field. Then, the normal rules will apply, just as they do with his colleague, Agent Shithead. He has his own reasons for behaving this way with me. I have some theories, but from what he told me earlier, my theories about Agents tend to be on the wrong side."

Anne snickered, "He sure seems pretty tame to me. I mean, he stood there and let you fire an automatic weapon at him."

"That's not tame, Anne, that's just supreme confidence in his own abilities. He knew I couldn't hit him with any of those bullets. You know, this has been my first direct observation of the Agent program's combat functionality. It's so much different from hearing about it through secondhand reports or debriefings, or even seeing it in the new Agent training program," I shuddered.

Lisa nodded, "Don't let it freak you out, he's still the same being who was making you scream yourself hoarse earlier. "

I shook my head, "It's not him, it's Brown. I've just realized that carrying a sidearm is a real waste of time. Unless I can get close enough and get the drop on him, a gun is pretty useless against an Agent."

Anne tucked her hand through my arm, "C'mon, let's take your mind off it by taunting that bunch of losers hiding out in the lounge."

We exchanged evil grins and went below. I stuck my head in the bedroom and told Jones where to find us.

NEXT INSTALLMENT: DON'T FORGET TO SUBMIT YOUR AGENT ENCOUNTER REPORTS

End
file.